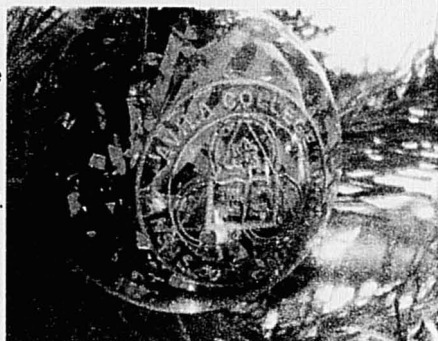


Ornament marks Avila's past as the community gets ready for the upcoming Christmas holiday.



TALON

AVILA UNIVERSITY

December 9, 2004 Vol. XIII ISSUE 8

Avila's snow procedure changes

Brandon Boles
Staff Writer

Students can expect a change in snow procedures this year. One problem last year was one of the television stations reported the wrong information. School was actually open, but the report stated that school was closed.

"I know it caused a lot of inconvenience," said Vice President of Academic Affairs Sister Marie Joan Harris. "My first time ever closing school during the middle of the day was last year at around 11 a.m. due to an updated forecast that I received around 10 a.m. that morning. Other community colleges and universities in the metro area closed as well."

During the winter, every morning Sister Marie gets up around 5 a.m. to check for snow. She listens to televised networks for further information on weather forecast. Maintenance arrives on campus as early as 3 a.m., plowing snow and clearing the parking lots, sometimes even the day before based on weather predictions. She then calls maintenance to get an updated description of the parking conditions. Sister

Marie calls other administrators who are local residents of the area to get an update on the condition of the streets within the community. Sister Marie gathers as much information as possible before she makes her decision by 5:45

person who controls the switchboard to leave a message saying school has been canceled.

If morning classes are not canceled but evening classes are, the procedures are the same, except Sister Marie tries

snow procedures for the current school year compared to last year is that Avila has a direct number to KCTV 5, KMBC TV 9, NBC Action News and WDAF TV Fox 4, television stations.

Last year Avila had access to the Fox station only.

"I drive when snow conditions are bad so it is important for the university to notify the television stations and radio stations on whether or not school will be canceled," junior Kim Jones said.

Once the call is made to television stations, the message will appear almost immediately across the television screen.

"I could not imagine coming to school when snow conditions are bad," senior David Madeo said.

Sister Marie said not to assume that because metro school districts are closing that Avila will close.

"We are here to prepare students for professionalism,"

Sister Marie said, "You know if it is safe to drive, use your own judgment."

For information on whether classes are canceled due to weather conditions watch the television news stations and (or) call 816-942-8400.

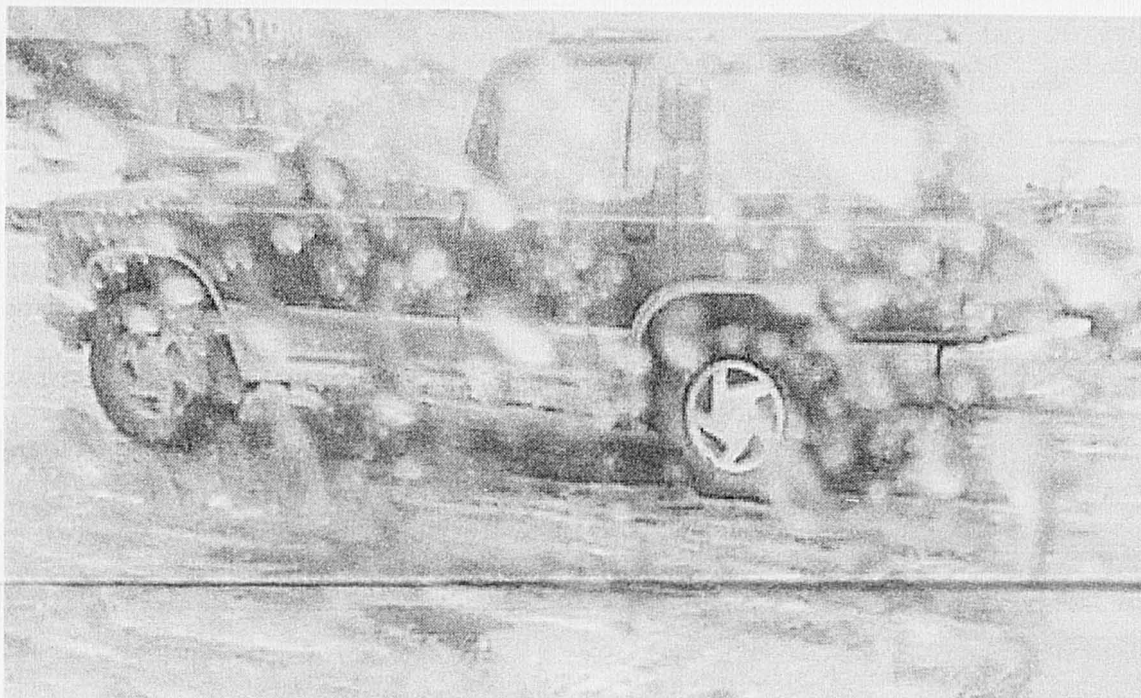


Photo by Jason Hez

a.m. on whether or not school should be canceled.

Avila is given a phone number to call if school is canceled due to bad weather. Once Sister Marie has made her decision she calls the number which is directed to radio and television networks. Once this is done, she calls the

to make her decision by 3 p.m.

Another problem that occurred last year was that students arrived at campus not knowing school was canceled. Sister Marie is making every effort to prevent something like this from happening again. A change that students and administrators can expect in the

Aguirre retires after 10 years

Tom Franklin
Staff Writer

After spending a decade in the student life office, Roberta Aguirre will retire from the Avila Student Life Office Dec. 22.

After raising three girls, Aguirre decided to help Bill, her husband, pay for their higher education (two are Avila alumnae). One day at St. Thomas Moore church, where she is still actively involved, she saw a job opening at Avila and applied for the position. Aguirre has worked in the Student Life Office since Nov. 16, 1994 working with Central Reservations for 10 years.

"She genuinely loves to work with

students," said Alicia Murillo, associate dean of student affairs. "The most telling thing about Ms. Roberta is that students call her Ms. Roberta."

Aguirre has been called the moral compass and the cornerstone of the student life office.

"We also call her Momma Roberta," Murillo said. "The [Student Life] team is a family and having a family member leave is very difficult."

"I really like this job," Aguirre said. "I like the students. The staff is fantastic and I have enjoyed myself through the years at Avila."

Continued on page 2
See Aguirre

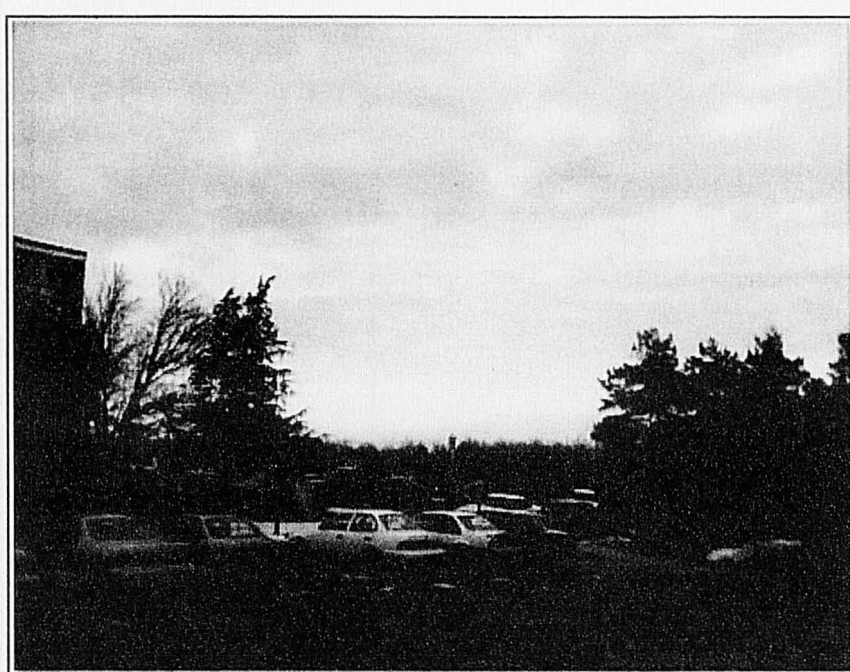


Photo by Jason Hez

Avila at sunset

"Know what you want to do, hold the thought firmly, and do every day what should be done, and every sunset will see you that much nearer the goal." -Elbert Hubbard (American writer 1856-1915)

Ellroy visits Avila

Rachel VanMeerhaeghe
Staff Writer

An author arrives to tell a story. What might be expected early in the morning from an author is not what occurs. The man is introduced; he walks into the room, steps up to the microphone and shoots words out of his mouth like a gun. Quick-witted words leave some students stunned.

James Ellroy visited campus Thursday, Nov. 18. While some students didn't know what to expect, others did. He started his lecture with

mind-blowing words and shouted them out to get student's attention. He continued with stories about some of his books (he read an excerpt from his latest) and finished with a question and answer session from the audience.

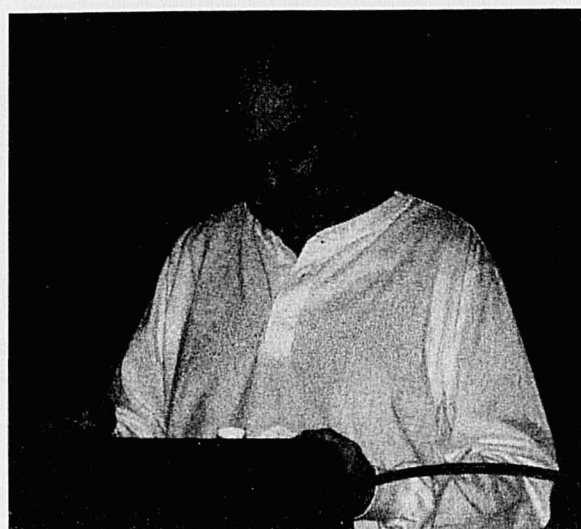
Junior Tom Sullivan said he wasn't surprised at the way Ellroy began his lecture.

"I knew a little bit about his reputation before the talk, so I was prepared for a showboating hotdog," Sullivan said.

Ellroy provided some advice to students. He said if you want to write, you

could. All you need to do is read many books and learn the language. He himself did just that. Ellroy is a high school dropout and learned to perfect his writing by reading.

Ellroy was born in Los Angeles. He has written many books including L.A. Confidential, My Dark Places, (about his mother's unsolved murder) and Black Dahlia.



James Ellroy visited Avila Nov. 18

Photo by Greg Orsdahl

Aguirre, continued from pg. 1

Senior Kira Stockreef worked as a Student Life work study for two and a half years and said that she will miss Aguirre.

"She is one of the first people to make me feel welcome here at Avila," Stockreef said. "I'm sad in my heart that she is leaving."

Aguirre says that she is pleased with



Photo by Greg Orsdahl

the way this campus has changed over the years and that it has become more student oriented to cater to their needs. Students have more say in what happens to them than in the past.

"In January I am going to be doing a lot of reading," Aguirre said. "And watching the snow and ice that I don't have to go out in."

She will also do some house cleaning and spend time with her grand daughter. Travel is also on Aguirre's agenda, with stops at the Grand Canyon and Hawaii.

"I am going to miss Avila but it is my time to move on," Aguirre said.

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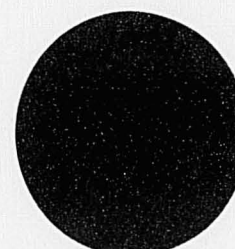
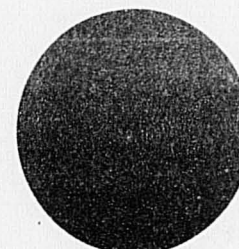
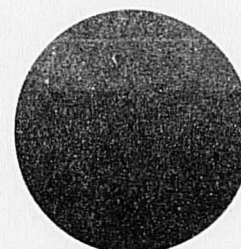
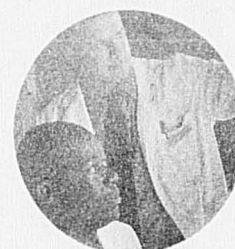
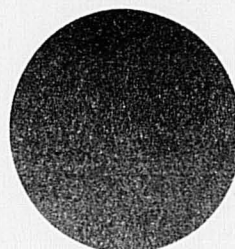
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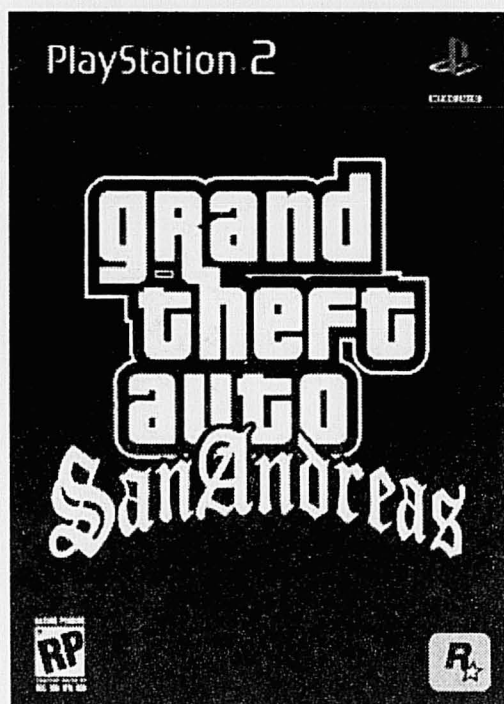
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GTA strikes again

Matt Schmidt
A & E Editor

With the release of Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, Rockstar Games (the publisher of GTA) has struck gold again. San Andreas offers up another round of good old-fashioned gang killings and crime sprees.

In this installment, you play as Carl "CJ" Johnson. After being released from prison, you head back home to San Andreas, greeted with the news of your mother's murder. Upon arrival, you are greeted by the prerequisite crooked cops, informing you that they will be keeping close tabs on you. From there, you are reunited with your old gang to rid the city of the



rival gang and find out who killed your mom...and to kill a bunch of people.

San Andreas offers a new level of gameplay that the previous games did not have. You must build your character's stamina, muscle, respect among your gang and overall health. You have to hit the local gym in order to bulk up and build some stamina (which is handy when running from the cops). There is a definite RPG feel involving your character, a nice addition.

The storyline is well done here, outside of the stupid subplot involving your girlfriend. There are a few twists and turns in the story that throw your character for a loop, even though you can see them coming from a mile away. The gameplay is solid enough to keep the gamer entertained and involved enough to keep playing.

The graphics and physics engine are pretty solid. The only flaw is the targeting system when firing your gun. The camera will occasionally point you at a wall instead of at your target, which really hurts when you are in gang war.

The most impressive element of this game is the detail and expansiveness. There is no small detail left out in this game and the map of the city is absolutely massive. You could explore the city for days on end and never see the same thing twice.

I won't spoil anything else for you, because you are leaving right now to go pick up the game, and you won't stop playing it for about three days. Trust me.

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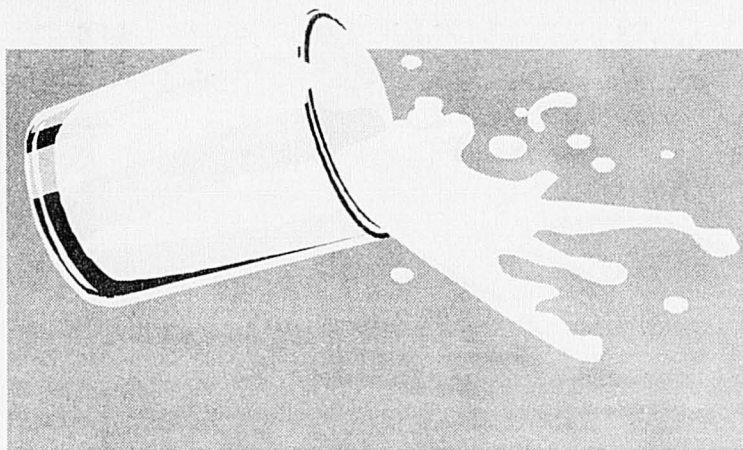
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Holiday Gift Guide

Mistletoe, ornaments, Nativity scenes and eggnog all have one thing in common: Christmas spirit. The true meaning of Christmas is different for everyone.

"It's when Jesus was born. It's a time to be with your family and celebrate your religion," sophomore Katy Mulligan said.

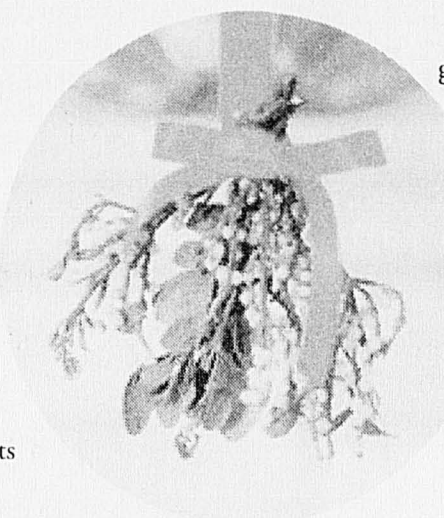
But to others, it may mean something completely different.

"Christmas is a break from school,"

first year student Lauren Miller said.

"Christmas is a time to spend sleeping, resting and playing video games," junior Randy Nevels said.

The holiday season is most commonly known for its



gift giving. Presents are placed under the tree and stockings are hung above the fireplace. One question remains: what to give your loved ones?

Let's think about it! What do your loved ones enjoy

doing? What are their likes and dislikes? How close are you with this person? Once you have answered these simple questions, think of something they might have mentioned or maybe something outrageous and unusual. The idea of gift giving is to leave behind something much greater than cost: the gift of love.

No matter who you are or where you are from, the holiday season brings home the spirit of love and life.

What NOT to get your girlfriend

Candy (That means you forgot!)

A membership to the YMCA

A free oil change

An engraved gift with her name spelled wrong

Adult videos



When buying clothes, it is better to buy them too small rather than too big!

What NOT to get your Boyfriend

A plant

Sappy, love songs on a mixed CD

A homemade picture frame

A reindeer Christmas sweater

A picture album with blank spaces for future photos (A little scary!)

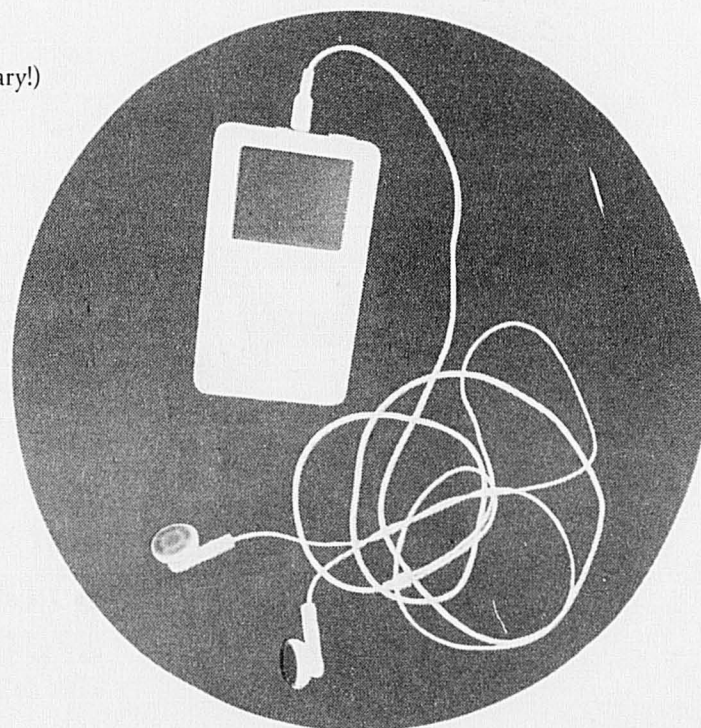


When buying clothes, it is better to buy them too big rather than too small!

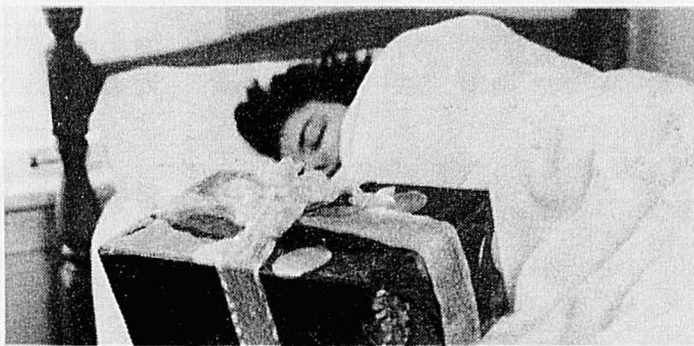
Hottest gift of the season

Here is one of the hottest gifts to give this season. The new mini iPod is a musical dream come true. It offers up to 12 hours of battery life and an entire music library. The mini iPod weighs just 5.6 ounces and can easily fit in your pocket.

If you are looking for a last minute gift, try creating a gift basket. It is easy and inexpensive. A simple floral arrangement or shower supply basket is creative and quick. If you are looking for something a little more personal, try an engraved picture frame or necklace.

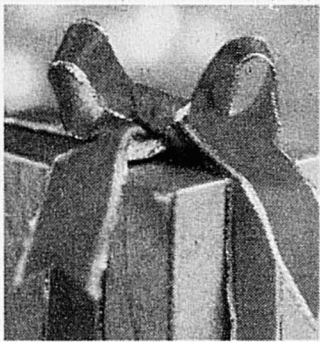


Quiz:



What to get your significant other for the holidays?

- 1). It's your first date. Where do you go?
 - a.) walk in the park
 - b.) dinner at Applebee's
 - c.) late night movie
 - d.) drinks and dancing
- 2). How long have you been together?
 - a.) just met
 - b.) one month
 - c.) more than one month
 - d.) more than one year
- 3). When you're at a restaurant, what do you order?
 - a.) house salad
 - b.) hamburger and fries
 - c.) fettuccini alfredo
 - d.) filet mignon and wine
- 4). You're picking out a movie at your local Blockbuster. What do you get?
 - a.) "The Terminator"
 - b.) "Fast and the Furious"
 - c.) "Dirty Dancing"
 - d.) "Titanic"
- 5). After the date is over, how do you say goodbye?
 - a.) a simple handshake
 - b.) a hug
 - c.) a kiss on the cheek
 - d.) French kiss baby!
- 6). When ordering dessert, what do you get?
 - a.) two cups of vanilla ice cream
 - b.) two slices of cheesecake
 - c.) split an apple crisp
 - d.) one milkshake, two straws
- 7). When flipping through the channels at home with your date, what do you watch?
 - a.) a college basketball game
 - b.) "Real World/Road Rules Challenge"
 - c.) "7th Heaven"
 - d.) "Dr. Phil"
- 8). Where do you go on a dinner date?
 - a.) McDonald's
 - b.) Panera Bread
 - c.) Houlihan's
 - d.) Cheesecake Factory
- 9). Your last text message says:
 - a.) see ya later
 - b.) call me tonight
 - c.) bye hunny
 - d.) I love you
- 10). After you hang up the phone, how long is it before you start to think about that person?
 - a.) you've already forgotten them
 - b.) the next day
 - c.) that night
 - d.) that minute



*Now add up all your letters.
The letter you chose the most is your answer.*

What to get your girlfriend:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| A | B | C | D |
| Flowers
(roses/daisies) | Clothing
(shirt/sweater) | Accessories
(watch/scarf) | Jewelry
(DIAMONDS) |

What to get your boyfriend:

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| A | B | C | D |
| CD | DVD
Video games | Cologne/
Clothing | Concert/Sport
Tickets |

Cheerleaders making progress toward nationals

Joel Ross
Sports Editor

The Avila cheerleaders and head coach Jason Sack believe the squad is making solid progress in terms of performing at its best level.

"We have accomplished a lot this year and we can still accomplish a lot more," Sack said.

"Most of our veterans and freshman can do about anything they are asked. Many veterans are helping the freshmen and becoming solid leaders. But I think the girls could do better (expand on their talents) and have not reached their potential yet," Sack said.

Sack also believes things are running smoother now that Katie Greenlee is no longer injured.

"I feel better with Katie involved because we need her talent on the squad. Her injury kind of hurt the team's overall talent when she was out the first part of the year," Sack said.

The team has another obstacle to overcome if they are to become more successful.

"We are very talented but everyone could do better at working together for the common good of the team

rather than their own personal good," first year cheerleader Brandi Braungardt said. "I think we can be a lot better if we overcome this."

The first year student are doing better than expected this year and that is helping the squad to more quickly gain success.

"Most of the freshmen are doing well," junior Marie Shelton said. They are very talented and

looking good right now."

If the cheerleaders can overcome injuries and continue to get better, Sack believes the team will be ready for College Nationals, Jan. 12-18 at Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

"We placed third out of 12 in our conference for College Nationals. I think if we continue to work hard we can hold third place in the national competition," Sack said.

Some of the women have experience cheering in state competition, which will help as the cheerleaders progress toward nationals.

"Five girls from Lee's Summit have been to a state competition. We have girls with lots of competition experience this year and that will help on the floor," Shelton said.

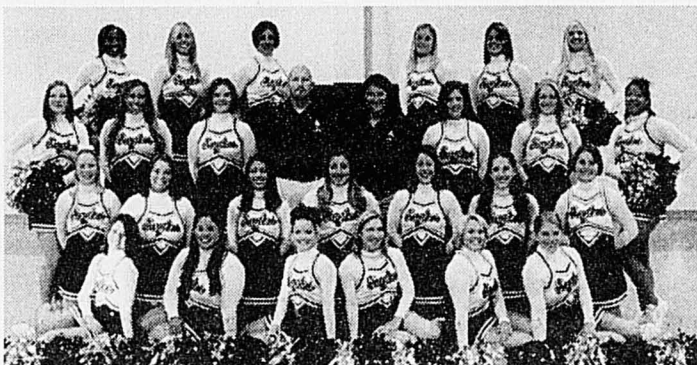


Photo courtesy of Avila website

Team members step up as some step down

Max Thompson
Staff Writer

Collegiate athletic seasons can be riddled with injuries, filled with close games and blow-outs, and revived by the emergence of inexperienced players. So when Avila women's basketball head coach Greg Mittelsteadt found out he had lost two key players early in the season, he didn't panic.

Senior Rachel Bradberry, a three-year starter and two-year captain, and junior Niki Lincoln, the biggest post presence on the Eagle's roster, according to Mittelsteadt, will both be lost most likely for the rest of the season.

"Rachel played on the perimeter with a height of about 5 feet 10 inches and that gave us some favorable matchups, so [the coaches] are having to do some things to create better matchups now," Mittelsteadt said.

Two experienced players out, in this case means less experienced players in, and has resulted in what Mittelsteadt calls a more patient approach with the team, and a lot more teaching. Without team leadership, the adjustments would

be much more difficult," Mittelsteadt added.

"Seniors Emily Eagan, Angie Kessler, and Kayla Thomas have really taken it upon themselves to step up and be leaders," Mittelsteadt said. "As a group I think we've all really come together and understood that everybody's going to have to contribute, which was important before the injuries but even more so now."

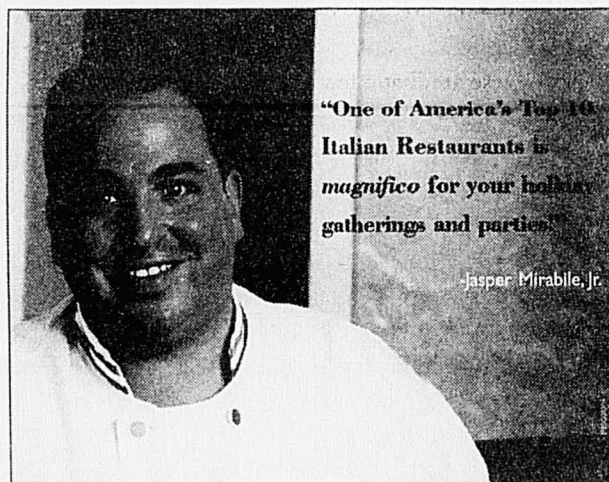
He also feared that the injuries would lead to players trying too hard to fill voids left by their fallen teammates, but so far the girls have stayed within their roles on the court. Even with the injuries, the team has managed to hover around .500 and Mittelsteadt is happy with the way the team has held up.

"I've been unbelievably happy with our group and how well they've played together. They're a team that works exceptionally hard, both on and off the court, and responds well to our coaching," Mittelsteadt said.

Five Game Schedule

Women's Basketball				
Date	Opponent	Location		Time
Dec. 9	Central Methodist	Avila		5:30 p.m.
Dec. 11	Culver-Stockton	Canton, Mo.		2 p.m.
Dec. 29	Texas Wesleyan	Fort Worth, Texas		5:30 p.m.
Jan. 6	Graceland	Lamoni, Iowa		5:30 p.m.
Jan. 8	Missouri Baptist	Avila		4 p.m.

Men's Basketball				
Date	Opponent	Location		Time
Dec. 9	Central Methodist	Avila		7:30 p.m.
Dec. 11	Culver Stockton	Canton, Mo.		4 p.m.
Jan. 4	Ottawa	Ottawa, Kan.		7 p.m.
Jan. 6	Graceland	Lamoni, Iowa		7:30 p.m.
Jan. 10	Mid-America Nazarene	Avila		7:30 p.m.



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Making maintenance fun

Nathan Brandt
Staff Writer

Maintenance, housekeeping and maintaining service on equipment is a job only head of building services Don Blinzler can make fun. Blinzler started working at Avila in January of 1999 and has no plans of departure.

"I like keeping it interesting, it's more fun that way," Blinzler said.

Keeping it interesting for Blinzler is mowing the grass with a

cone on his head or covering himself in purple on purple Wednesday and even taking a couple minutes out of his day to cook up a little bit of food in the cafeteria.

Five days a week from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Blinzler can be seen on campus taking care of anything that goes wrong and also trying to find ways to amaze the next person.

"Don made himself well known around campus," sophomore Katie

Newman said.

Mostly dealing with the dorms, Blinzler contributes a lot to the campus.

"It's a little bit of everything," Blinzler said.

"Don's ways of maintaining seem more entertaining, but that's why Don's one of a kind," student Lynsey Markes said.

The biggest thing Blinzler worries about is keeping everything running in a timely matter. If the water in the dorms is too cold or

too hot, Blinzler will be there. If anyone needs a smile, Blinzler will be there.

Even though Blinzler has busy days, he saves enough time to keep it fun and maintain the smile on his face, as well as on others.

Sonhayé stands out

Erin Stewart
Staff Writer

Anxiously thinking of which colleges to send applications, stressfully trying to fill out numerous scholarships, applying for grants, and nervously waiting for acceptance letters from top college picks. These are just a few examples of what students in high school, or maybe just graduating high school, go through in planning for their futures in some form of a higher education.

Imagine growing up and when it's time for college only sending an application to one university. This is how it is in West Africa, in the country of Togo; the major university is called University of Lomé, or LU. Lomé is

the capital of Togo.

There are only a few other smaller private colleges in Togo. Avila international student Raifatou Sonhayé is currently attending her second year at Avila. Sonhayé is planning on earning a nursing degree from Avila.

"Avila is located in a relatively small city, so since it's in a smaller city, it will be good for school," Sonhayé said.

Sonhayé encountered obstacles such as nonverbal communication, and the cultural change when she first arrived in the United States.

"You have to get used to it," Sonhayé said. "I could understand when people were talking to me, but my accent was really different and it was hard for people to understand me."

Sonhayé speaks five languages, English, French, and three West African dialects. One dialect is from North of Togo, the second dialect is from the South, and the last dialect is from her home village, Bassar. Sonhayé learned of Avila from other students attending Avila and the Internet.

Bruce Inwards, director of intensive language and culture program, said that many international students hear about Avila through overseas magazine advertisements, through recruiting potential interested students, through the Avila website, and by working closely with education advising centers.

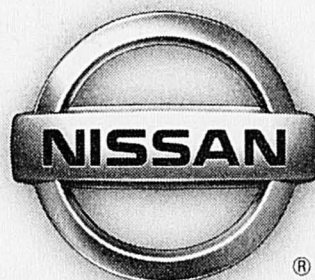
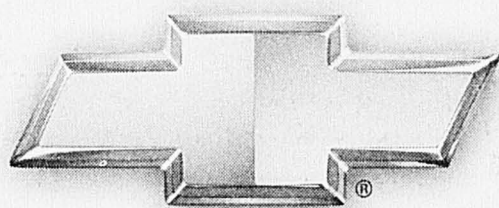
Education advising centers are where universities and colleges work to advise

international students who are interested in attending higher education in other countries.

While Sonhayé is in the United States, she has a few goals she would like to tackle. Sonhayé wants to finish her schooling, start her life on her own, and start working for a while.

"I would like to work at a hospital or doctor's office, anywhere I can work at, just a place where I can practice what I learn," Sonhayé said.

When Sonhayé has achieved her goals in schooling, making a life for herself, and working, she feels she will be ready to return to her home in West Africa.



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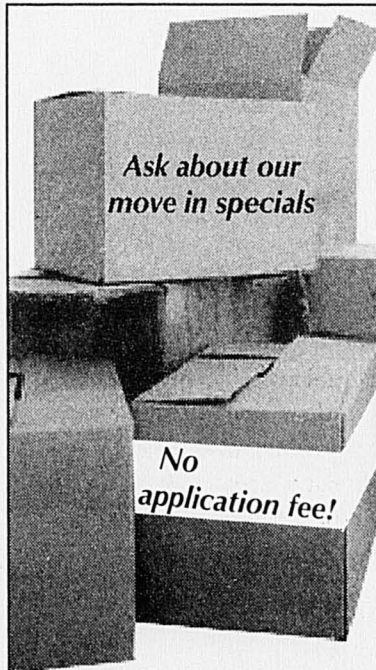
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It's not just out there

Nicole Sowders
Opinion's Editor

"Click, click, click." As I begin to accelerate, my right foot gently pushing on my gas pedal I hear a clicking noise. I pull over, kill the engine and glance under the hood. As I'm thinking of the various possibilities that could be wrong with my car, curse words fly from my mouth and I feel enraged. I get back in my car; realizing nothing I am doing is going to fix my car. I start the car again, "click, click, click." I drive to school and go to class. After class I go to get my oil changed at Jiffy Lube. This is the only thing I can imagine that could be wrong.

While sitting in Jiffy Lube, I look at my forest green 1998 Geo-Tracker. It has a white soft top, a big dent in the side door from a high school incident, a dent in the front (from a hit-and-run) and a messed up bumper from backing into a

fire hydrant. I stare at my car, very upset. It is not a nice car, which only infuriates me more. Now I'm mad, it's a horrible car.

"Click, click, click." I pull out of the Jiffy Lube, nothing apparently appeared askew to the men changing my oil. Pondering my next move, I decide there is only one other thing to do.

Not to stereotype or offend women, but I have no idea what's wrong with my car. I did what most women my age might do: I called my dad.

My dad calls my uncle, a mechanic, and then tells me to go over to his house. During this entire ordeal, I became increasingly angry. I don't have time to write my Communication Theory paper and simultaneously deal with my stupid green dented car.

"Click, click, click." I drive to my uncle's. He tells me that he needs a day with it. I get a ride home and arrange the

rest of my week without my car. That's right, no car. This is a big deal to most people, but then again, is it?

During this time, I am nothing but negative about the situation. Not only am I clearly rude to my family, but also probably very unpleasant to anyone I came in contact with. To top it all off, while I'm listening to 98.1 FM starting their holiday music, I remember it is the holiday season. Not everyone has a dented forest green car to complain about.

"Click, click, click." I still hear the loud clicking noise in my car; evidently waiting too long to change the oil ruins the bearings. The clicking noise will not go away, but every time I hear that clicking, I remember some people have to take the bus, and don't have a car to drive around town. Please, during the holiday season, remember to think of others, not just yourself.

Iliff moves to new position

Katie McRoberts
Advertising Manager

For those who have attended Associate Professor of Communication Steve Iliff's classes or had the opportunity to chat with him, it is easy to recognize that he genuinely cares about his students and peers alike.

Iliff started at Avila as an adjunct roughly 10 years ago. In January, Iliff will begin his new position as Dean of the school of Professional Studies, in charge of Avila Advantage. Iliff is excited for his new position, but will miss teaching.

"I think I was ready for a change and it's a tremendous opportunity. I'm not going to be teaching as much, and that's the part that I had to really, really think about; really, really consider. Do I really want to teach only one class a semester? Right now I teach five," Iliff said.

Iliff has taught Fundamentals of Communication, Communication Theory, Introduction to Journalism, Presentational Speaking, among others.

"I've taught a ton of classes and also developed most of the courses; almost everything I've taught. Next semester I'm teaching Team Leadership. Most likely I'll continue to teach Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies."

Iliff has also been the faculty advisor to The Talon for many years.

"I think we have really developed the newspaper. We've moved it from where it was, to up here. And we're good. One of the things we've developed, which we did not have when we started, is a great staff. People want to be on 'he Talon.' It didn't used to be that way."

Despite everything, Iliff still felt it was time for something different.

"I've been saying this for a couple of years now; I think The Talon needs some-

body with a new perspective. It needs new blood, new energy and a new way of looking at it. Well, new means not me."

Iliff will miss many things about the communication department.

"There is a high energy level in this building. That's hard to leave. If it isn't broken, don't fix it. In a way, my life's not broken, so why am I fixing it? It is very difficult to leave the communication area. I love what we teach and I love how we teach it. I'm giving that up."

Iliff will miss the students, but particularly his surrounding staff.

"The students are great, but they leave after four years. The faculty, the people I'm working with down here, they stay. This is going to be hard and different, and I will miss them. I've worked with Dotty, Ben and Kasey for a long time. Our skills and styles are different, but we complement each other well."

Iliff's colleagues feel the same.

"I will miss Steve in this department because of his wonderful perspective. In the past when I have had a curriculum issue or a problem to solve, I have always gone to Steve because he is so very good at seeing numerous aspects of a situation. He offers the pros and cons and in doing so assists me in arriving at the best possible solution. I am really going to miss having him around," Instructor of Communication Kasey Riley said.

"While I will miss Steve's presence in the Department, I know that he will continue to be an asset to Avila in his new position. Steve's contributions to our success are just too numerous to mention," Dean of the School of Visual and

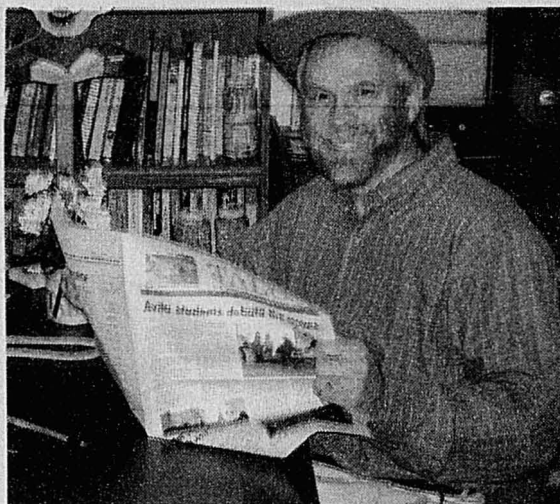


Photo by Greg Orscheln

Communication Arts Dotty Hamilton said.

Iliff is looking forward to the challenge of his new position.

"Avila Advantage is a fascinating program. We have a lot going on and we're really expanding. I like setting up processes and systems, and that's what Avila Advantage needs," Iliff said.

Iliff's role in the success of the communication department is significant. He helped shape and develop a program that represents true education by way of interactive learning. Iliff symbolizes all aspects associated with extraordinary teaching styles and is what every leader, teacher, instructor, professor and educator should attain to become.

The Talon staff encourages his new endeavors and understand that where Iliff goes, success follows.

"This is not farewell. I wouldn't be leaving from communication if I couldn't stay with Avila. In some ways, everything I've been doing here for the past 10 years has led to this new position. Avila is wonderful. It is a niche for me. It's perfect."

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